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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 002405

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/13/2006

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [XF](#) [PROV](#) [OIC](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA -- RESPONSE TO OIC DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 159557

Classified by CDA Andrews; Reasons 1.5(b) and (d).

11. (C) CDA 19 September delivered reftel demarche to MFA Permanent Secretary Ambassador T.D. Hart. Hart said that Nigeria was not a member of the OIC but attended meetings as an observer with a ceremonial rather than substantive delegation. The delegation head (usually a senior Islamic figure, such as the Sultan of Sokoto) could be given an instruction to make an appropriate statement, Hart offered. (COMMENT: The Sultan has already spoken out against the terrorist attacks at least twice. END COMMENT.)

12. (C) Before CDA even could raise the point, Hart noted that intelligence-sharing would be critical to fighting terrorism in the months and years ahead. Hart said he was disturbed that one of the hijackers might have visited Nigeria. (COMMENT: It is very well known in elite circles here that the passport of one of the suspected hijackers indicates he spent six weeks in Nigeria. Senior Nigerians know that their country is an unusual destination for the casual tourist and are concerned that, if the hijacker really came here, it was on business. END COMMENT.)

13. (C) Hart noted that Nigerian participation in the OIC was "controversial" because of the country's religious diversity. He said that MFA staff were actively thinking about ways Nigeria could help in the fight against terror and invited the USG to provide input into that process. Andrews